

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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OES-09 GSA-02 STR-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /064 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4038

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EMIN AS

SUBJECT: NICKEL - GOA VIEWS ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL DISCUSSION GROUP

REF: (A) STATE 183006 (NOTAL, (B) CANBERRA 06163

1. SUMMARY: FURTHER TO EMBASSY'S REPORT ON THE "POSSIBLE NICKEL DIALOGUE" REFTEL (B), THE GOA AS NOW PROVIDED THE EMBASSY WITH A RESPONSE IN MORE DETAIL TO THE QUESTION POSED IN REFTEL (A) QUOTE WITHOUT A MORE SPECIFIC IDEA OF WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ENVISIONS FOR THE "INTERGOVERNMENTAL DISCUSSION GROUP" WE (THE USG) WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO JOIN IN ANY OPEN-ENDED MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON THE SUBJECT END QUOTE. THE GOA'S RESPONSE IS IN THE FORM OF A LETTER FROM J.M. WILCOX, ACTING FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY, COMMODITIES DIVISION NUMBER 2 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND RESOURCES. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE GOA TALKING POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

"THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED AT THE DEPRESSED STATE OF THE NICKEL INDUSTRY WORLD WIDE AND SEES MERIT IN INTERGOVERNMENTAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MAJOR PRODUCING AND CONSUMING COUNTRIES WITH A VIEW TO
-EXPLORING THE DESIRABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF

ESTABLISHING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL DISCUSSION GROUP OF NICKEL
PRODUCING AND CONSUMING COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD PROVIDE AN
INTERNATIONAL FORUM

(I) FOR THE EXCHANGE OF UP-TO-DATE AND AUTHORITATIVE
STATISTICS AND INFORMATION ON PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION,
TRADE, END-USE ON WHICH TO BASE FORECASTS ETC., AND

(II) DISCUSSION OF INDUSTRY PROBLEMS

-THE INTENTION IS TO ESTABLISH AN INTER-
GOVERNMENTAL GROUP ASSISTED BY INDUSTRY ADVISERS.

3. "IT IS ENVISAGED SUCH A GROUP WOULD BE AN BEGIN UNDERLINE
ADVISORY BODY END UNDERLINE WHICH WOULD COLLECT DATA AND
ANALYZE THE PRESENT MARKET SITUATION, STUDY LONGER TERM
TRENDS AND CONSIDER PAST MARKET PERFORMANCE WITH A VIEW TO
PREPARING PAPERS WHICH COULD BE USED BY INDIVIDUAL GOVERN-
MENTS OR COMPANIES AS THEY SEE FIT. A SHORTER TERM AIM
WOULD BE THE PREPARATION OF A RELIABLE STATISTICAL BASE
WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE DISTRIBUTION OF MEANINGFUL STATISTICS TO
INTERESTED COUNTRIES AT REGULAR INTERVALS.

4. "THE MAIN OBJECT OF THE GROUP WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A
MORE INFORMED BACKGROUND FOR THE NICKEL INDUSTRY AGAINST
WHICH PROPERLY BALANCED DECISIONS COULD BE MADE IN RESPECT
OF ONGOING INVESTMENT IN THE INDUSTRY TO THE MUTUAL BENEFIT
OF PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS ALIKE. THE GROUP WOULD HAVE NO
MANDATORY POWERS, IT WOULD BE PURELY AN ADVISORY BODY.
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5. "THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS HAD PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS
WITH CANADA, JAPAN, USA, FRANCE AND FRG. IN SUMMARY,
SUPPORT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM CANADA, FRANCE AND FRG.
JAPAN WAS NONCOMMITAL. THE USA WAS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT
THE PROPOSAL.

6. "THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SEES MERIT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A WORKING PARTY TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSAL. IT IS ENVISAGED
THE WORKING PARTY WOULD DISCUSS
-CURRENT STATE OF THE NICKEL INDUSTRY WORLD WIDE;
-PROBLEMS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY;
-THE AVAILABILITY OF AUTHORITATIVE UP-TO-DATE
STATISTICS ON PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION, TRADE, END USE, ETC.;
-WHAT IMPROVEMENT IF ANY CAN BE ACHIEVED IN THE
COLLECTION, COLLATION AND DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICS.

7. "ARISING FROM CONSIDERATION OF THE FOREGOING AND ANY
OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS RAISED BY DELEGATES, THE WORKING
PARTY WOULD EXAMINE THE DESIRABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF
ESTABLISHING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL DISCUSSION GROUP OF NICKEL
PRODUCING AND CONSUMING COUNTRIES, AS A FORUM FOR THE

CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION.

8. "IT IS ENVISAGED THE WORKING PARTY WOULD COMPRISE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNTRIES ALREADY APPROACHED, AND THAT THE FIRST MEETING WOULD BE HELD IN CANBERRA IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1978."

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9. COMMENT: EMBASSY INFORMED WILCOX THAT GOA EXPLANATION WOULD BE RELAYED PROMPTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT AND AT THE SAME TIME STATED THAT, GIVEN THE EXPLANATION OF THE USG RESPONSE (STATE 183006) THERE SEEMED TO BE NO POSSIBILITY WHATSOEVER OF USG PARTICIPATION IN THE ENVISAGED WORKING PARTY TO SAY NOTHING OF THE POSSIBILITY OF MEETING IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1978 IN CANBERRA. WILCOX SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THIS BUT WAS IN FACT RESPONDING TO AN INQUIRY RECEIVED FROM GOA EMBASSY WASHINGTON ASKING WHETHER OR NOT THERE HAD BEEN A DISCUSSION HERE WITH THE EMBASSY ON THE ISSUE SINCE THE WASHINGTON EMBASSY WANTED TO BE IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THE CANADIANS WHO WILCOX SUGGESTED, ARE WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH THE GOA VIEWS ON THE MATTER. FYI, WILCOX RECONFIRMED THAT THE SUBJECT WILL BE BROUGHT UP BY THE AUSTRALIANS IN THEIR DISCUSSION WITH THE GAO STUDY TEAM ON U.S. RELIANCE ON FOREIGN PROCESSED RAW MATERIALS WHICH ARRIVES IN CANBERRA NEXT WEEK.
ALSTON

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